Vol. 1 MAY, 1947 No. 5

20c a copy; $1.50 per year; $3 for 3 years
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FILLERS

EDITED BY E. Haldeman-Julius

A Sampling of Vaudeville and Radio Gags

AND MORE THAN 100 OTHER SHORT PIECES

Published monthly by E. Haldeman-Julius at 229 E. Forest Ave., Girard, Kansas. Application for entry as second-class matter is pending.
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1843

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A SAMPLING OF VAUDEVILLE AND RADIO GAGS

When I was a boy in Philadelphia—the city of my birth—in the first decade of the century, I used to go to the scrumptious Keith vaudeville theatre on Chestnut street. Ben Welch, the Hebrew comedian, could always send me into spasms. He'd just walk out and I'd shriek with laughter. I poured out belly-laffs at the end of each sentence. He was a funny fellow—at least, I thought so then. Now, at the ripe age of 57, I look back and ask myself just what did Ben Welch say that seemed so funny when I was a kid. I have the answer, and it's depressing. I have actually looked into Ben Welch's script, and I have to admit that the stuff was melancholy rubbish. What made me laugh then makes me groan today. Here's a paragraph from the great dialectician's monologue:

> I was just in dere vot I thought was a saloon, but it's a gambling joint. Dere vas a lot of pocket pickers, Jessie Jimmies and A. P. A.'s. Dere vos a lot of hoboes sitting aroundt the stove talking about who they vould tap on the nut. In the front room dey got a pig veel, vot goes roundt and roundt, and you pet on the numbers. Sometimes you vin—sometimes. Roulittes. Den in anoder room they got a game vot I neffer seen pefore, shaking dice. Scripps. Den I drank a gin physic

and got drunk. I met Jake, mine son, and he says: "Fader, ve vill haf a good time." He is a okum fiend. Smokes okum. Effery night he's got a million dollars. Last night he says: "Fader, I feel bad. I think I'll go to St. Louis." Den he took a silver pencil, filled vid white water, oudt of his pocket and shoot it in his arm, and in two minutes he was governor of New York. One more shoot and he would be president of the United States. He giv me a shoot once, and I got so foolish I paid de rent. He hadt a pank roll vot vould choke a horse. Sefen dollars, I ped you. He took me to de athletic club. Ven ve got in two young fellers come on the platform and shook hands and den right avay dey got to fighting, and somebody caled "Time." I said: "Half-past six," and I got a wallop on her hedt vot made me see stars.

Yes, I agree. Drekish bowel-paste, but is it a degree worse than the Red Skelton, Bob Hope, Bob Burns, Jack Benny, Georgie Burns rubbish that's poured out night after night? You who laughed heartily last night over the saddening gags of Bob Hope would probably blush if, a generation hence, you came on one of his radio scripts and studied the words that once sent you into stitches.

Back in Ben Welch's time there was an-

other Hebrew comedian, Julian Rose, who also made me laugh till I was fit to die. Here's a fat paragraph from one of his scripts:

I vant to tell you about Levinski's wedding. It was a great affair and very swell. I got an invitation a veek ago, and thought that, as my hair was coming out, I would grow some new hair, and I got a hair destroyer and drank three bottles, and my hair cum out fine—all of it. Cohen he got an invitation, too, but he wrote Levinski and told him he had to go see "Hamlet." Levinski wrote back and told him to bring Hamlet along. He didn't know Hamlet was a theatre; he thought he was a man. Well, when the wedding cum off it was a great time. Everybody has a great time at a wedding. A man vot vorks for me got married not long ago, and I had to let him off half a day. Sometimes it takes longer. Ve vore efening dress. I vent in my pajumpers. The bride was dressed up to kill. She looked like a kosher butcher. She vore a low-neck delicatessen dress and carried a punch of don't-forget-me-nots in her handt. She vore orange blossoms on her het, ven she ought to hadt lemons, for Got knows she got a lemon in Levinski. He vas a fine-looking pridegroom. His pants vas so tight

dat ven he sat down he stood up. I vas gladt ven it vas all ofer. Der pride vas led to der altar—but dey had to push Levinski.

Cut out the dialect and read the lines straight — you have a perfect Bob Hope script. Some reader who has the time and energy should translate the above into straight English and mail it to Bob Hope with the suggestion that he buy it for use in one of his radio shows. Here's a chance to make a few dimes. Only the accent is out-dated. You think I'm being extreme? Well, look at this, which I heard in 1946: Steward on steamship: "Mr. Hope, your lunch will be up in a minute." Bob Hope (seasick): "So will my breakfast." Steward: "You want to look out, the captain's coming up." Bob Hope: "I don't care what comes up."

Or, take this masterpiece of radio humor by Bob Burns:

As the boat from San Diego was about to leave for San Francisco, my uncle Ephram, who was a young feller then, led a blushing and buxom damsel by the hand and approached the polite clerk and said in a low and confidential tone: "Mister, me and my wife have jest got spliced and are looking for accommodations." "Looking for a berth, I suppose?" said the clerk, as he passed tickets

to others who were waiting. "A birth! Thunder and lightning, no!" yelled my uncle. "We hain't but just got married. We only want a place to stay all night, you know, that's all!"

Had enough? Just a little more patience, please, while you look at this line from Red Skelton: "Laugh and the world laughs with you, but eat an onion and you sleep alone."

Oh, yes, let's not neglect Jack Benny and Rochester, who offered this one: Jack Benny: "Rochester, where is that ox-tail soup?" Rochester: "Coming, boss — half a minute." Jack Benny: "Confound you, how slow you are." Rochester: "Fault of the soup, boss. Ox tail is always behind."

George Burns, to talkative Gracie: "I want nothing but silence, and but little of that."

Fibber McGee: "I never deny Mollie a wish." "I didn't know you were rich, McGee?" "I don't have to be wealthy; it don't cost me anything when Mollie wishes."

A little more of Bob Hope, on that famous sea voyage: "All passengers were heaving, and as if that wasn't enough, the captain gave orders for the ship to heave to."

Yes, you've had enough, I'm sure.

* * *

I'm looking for the words of two songs I often heard 45 years ago around Philadelphia's roughest spots. The first: "Who

Threw the Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder?" The second: "Take It in Your Hand, Mrs. Murphy, It Weighs But a Quarter of a Pound." The latter was an earthy piece that was popular with the audiences that attended the Kensington Theatre, up on Kensington avenue, where the rough weavers enjoyed coarse entertainment at 10c up. I sat in the 10c gallery, where the smell was heavy. There wasn't a toilet in the establishment, so the patrons would do their business against the back wall of the gallery while the show was on or between the acts. Later, when Frank Harris (a great authority on Shakespeare) told me about the atmosphere in Shakespeare's Globe Theatre—how it was a combination of saloon and bawdy house — I pictured the place as another Kensington, especially in the use that men made of the back walls. I lack literary power to describe the odor of tens of thousands of barrels of old and new kidney leakings. But, sickening as it was, I loved to join the vulgar crowds, hear their coarse jests, listen to the equally coarse songs and jokes that came from the stage, and watch the huge girls, in pink tights, do things that aroused men's baser passions. After all, if a guy has base passions he should use them once in a while, including mine. One act had about 12 enormous blondes, in tights, each weighing more than 250 pounds, the ensemble advertised as "the Beef Trust." "Billy Watson's Beef

Trust," popular for so many years in the Republic's burlesque houses, probably developed from this act on the Kensington stage. What happened to the Kensington? When did it come down? What took its place? Could anything ever take its place? In one act, a burlesque queen, wearing a cop's hat, took a drunk in charge, saying, "You're under arrest — I'm a policeman." The drunk: "If you're a policeman, where's your club?" I can still hear the shouts of laughter.

* * *

Noel Coward: "Alfred Lunt has his feet in the clouds and his head in the box office."

* * *

An educator's remark—"Education is a wonderful thing if you aren't a teacher"—reminded me of a story about a lady who advertised for a butler who was 5 feet 8 inches tall, 38 waist, and who could wear trousers 32 inches in length. Smith, seeing the ad, found his physical make-up qualified him for the job. He applied, and the lady informed him that it was necessary that he should fit the above specifications. Her previous butler had passed away and it was decided to hire a man who could wear his clothes. She proceeded to measure the applicant and found him O. K. "But," she said, "we have another suit that our butler must wear, and in order that I may be assured that you can wear this suit it will be

necessary for you to show me your ankle." The applicant complied, and being satisfied that the ankle was just right, she asked him to raise his pants leg for a glance at his knee, which, on inspection, was found to be to her satisfaction. Then she said: "Now, please show me your testimonials." Not long after, the man left and was heard to mutter to himself: "Had I possessed a better education I think I would have gotten that job."

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Calvin Collander, in The American Liberal: "A report from Monroe, Ga., where four Negroes were lynched, says the leader of the lynching mob 'looked like a retired businessman.' Generally speaking, the more backward the community, the more likely are the 'best people' to participate in a lynching."

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Mae West: "There is more to life than increasing its speed."

✣ ✣ ✣

Reader: "I fret very much at the great spread of supernatural garbage which is flooding the U. S. The press, radio and movies are supporting it everywhere and only The Freeman, and Truth-Seeker, and Freethinker in th U. S. combat it. The last two, in my opinion, weaken their position by refuting various points of doctrine taken from the Bible, when it should all be treated

with the utmost ribald contempt as The Freeman does. The Bible should not be dignified by serious discussion of its rubbish."

✣ ✣ ✣

Man, to washroom attendant: "Do you think it's going to rain, George?" Porter: "Do you imagine I'd be wasting my time in this craphouse if I could prognosticate the precipitation?"

✣ ✣ ✣

Nelson Antrim Crawford, who did two books for me—"13 Notable Short Stories" and a full-length novel, "A Man of Learning"—tells of meeting a farmer in Kansas who said: "That sure is a great school. It's practical. They don't teach no goddam grammar there."

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From John Gregory's "A Father's Legacy to His Daughters" (published after the American Revolution): "Wit is the most dangerous a girl can have, and she'd better be careful even about displaying good sense."

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Rich sport: "Polo is the ideal game to display the virtues of conspicuous waste and busy, energetic idleness. Chess is the poor man's polo."

✣ ✣ ✣

Said a century ago by an unidentified patriot: "True republicanism requires that every man shall have an equal chance—

that every man shall be free to become as unequal as he can."

* * *

From Mrs. James Parton's book of etiquette (published before the Civil War): "Always whisper and laugh at concerts by way of complimenting performers." . . . Another expert of the same period: "The practice of wearing one's hat in the house tends to vice and immorality." . . . And here's still another: "The waltz is a dance of too loose a character, and unmarried ladies should refrain from it altogether."

* * *

A woman, on being asked whether she had seen the Dardanelles while abroad, said: "Oh, yes; we dined with them several times."

* * *

Ambrose Bierce: "Conservative, n. A statesman who is enamored of existing evils, as distinguished from the Liberal, who wishes to replace them with others." . . . "Idiot, n. A member of a large and powerful tribe whose influence in human affairs has always been dominant and controlling." . . . "Love, n. A temporary insanity curable by marriage or by removal of the patient from the influence under which he incurred the disorder." . . . "Politics, n. A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage."

DEFENDER OF THE FAITH

Monsignor von Gerlach (to Pierre van Paassen): "The night following the Duce's arrival in Rome, the Holy Father slept in peace for the first time in many months."

Cardinal Mundelein, in 1925: "Mussolini is a great man, the man of the day."

Pope Pius XI, in 1926: "Mussolini is the man sent by Providence."

Winston Churchill, in 1927: "If I were Italian, I'd wear the black shirt."

Cardinal O'Connell, in 1934: "Mussolini is the man of miracles."

Mussolini, in 1934: "War is to the man as maternity to the woman. I don't believe in perpetual peace. I not only don't believe in it, but I find it depressing and negative for the fundamental virtues of manhood, which need a bloody struggle to reach full bloom."

Cardinal O'Connell, in 1934: "Mussolini is a genius in the field of political science, whom God has given to Italy to help that nation continue its rapid climb toward the most glorious destiny."

Mussolini (in his book "John Huss"):

"Five centuries after the Hussite sermons, the Catholic clergy has mended none of its ways. At every Congress, the clergy of Italy and Austria protest the occupation of Rome by the Italian government, and the black world of Jesuits has not forgiven, will perhaps never forgive, 'him who withholds'."

Foerster-Nietzsche, in 1935: "Mussolini is the most admirable disciple of Zarathustra that Nietzsche could have imagined."

Mussolini, in 1935: "War is our supreme goal."

George N. Shuster, leading Catholic layman and president of Hunter College, New York, in 1935: "Mussolini had also laid bare defects in the plan and structure of parliamentary democracy, stalemate nearly everywhere by reason of an unending, and unendable, clash of interests."

Cardinal Hinsley, in 1935: "If Fascism goes under, God's cause goes with it."

Mussolini (title of an early book of his): "God Doesn't Exist."

Cardinal Schuster, in 1935: "The Italian flag is at this moment bringing in triumph the Cross of Christ to Ethiopia."

Chamberlain, in 1937: "I don't think anybody wants to start a war."

Roberto Farinacci, Fascist Party Secretary, in 1938: "Modern states, including the sanest and most audacious nations of Europe, like Italy and Germany, can learn much from the fathers of the Society of Jesus."

Pope Pius XII, in 1939: "Always strong and alert under the august and prudent hand of the King, Emperor of Ethiopia, and his foresighted government, Italy remains peaceful in its civil life, in its concord of spirits, in the solemn rites of the Catholic religion."

Winston Churchill, in 1940: "I don't deny that Mussolini is a great man."

Mussolini, in 1940: "Victory is in our grasp!"

—— CURTAIN ——

* * *

Katherine M. Godley, Greenwich, Conn.: "I visited the Rand Book Shop in New York recently but didn't see any of your publications. I asked someone there, 'Why the absence?' He replied: 'Haldeman-Julius has been out of date for years!' "

* * *

A word to my authors: Long sentences are all right if handled properly, but re-

member they're tricky and have to be watched for continuity. Some of my writers mix up their long sentences so that they begin going in one direction at the beginning and end up moving sideways, if you get what I mean.

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Woman, handing jug to man behind lunch counter: "Fill this with seven cups of coffee—three black and four with cream and sugar—you just pour them in. It's up to me to get them out."

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Ambrose Bierce's good opening sentences to two stories: (1) "Early one June morning in 1872 I murdered my father — an act which made a deep impression on me at the time." (2) "My father was a deodorizer of dead dogs, my mother kept the only shop for the sale of cats' meat in my native city. They did not live happily: the difference in social rank was a chasm which could not be bridged by the vows of marriage."

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A New York high-school teacher (not Paul Eldridge) works days instructing the young for $51.25 a week, and nights as a bartender for $60 a week. Which is he? Judged by his remuneration, he's a bartender who teaches school on the side.

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An old customer—who'd been away from Joplin, Mo., many months—called for the

Madame herself, to whom he said: "My interests now are divided between Flagellation, Sadism and Masochism—alone or in combination." "Why," exclaimed the Madame, rubbing her hands and smiling amiably, "we haven't had calls for that sort of thing in a long, long time—but I'll give you a ring if anything in your line turns up. You understand, I'm sure, that Joplin has never been a lush field for luxury items. I know exactly what you have in mind." He: "It seems to me you might care to reach out for a more sophisticated clientele. These things are conducted so much more subtly by practitioners I came on in Paris, Brussels, Nice, Budapest and Naples. The war did a lot to change my horizon. Broadened me, you know. I can't complain what the army did for me." Madame: "You understand, I hope, that we here work along more conventional, orthodox lines." He: "That all belongs to the horse-and-buggy age. Don't tell me you're going to compel me to spend my week-ends in Tulsa, Oklahoma City and Wichita." Madame: "I'll ask you to not try to run my business for me. I'm here to serve my customers, but I don't feel I should be criticized if I accept local conditions as they are and don't try to introduce startling innovations. I know the places in the cities you mentioned and I don't think they've got much on Joplin. Yes, they're larger, but there isn't a great deal of difference." He: "And that's what you

think. I happen to know that Tulsa can almost stand up to Bucharest in catering to extra-sensitive palates." Madame: "I'm ready to bet that 99 and nine-tenths of Tulsa's business is of the same mine-run stuff that we serve right here in little Joplin. You can't run an establishment that caters to the tastes of the one odd person in a thousand. We have to take people as they come. I'll have to be excused. Busy. But don't go away mad."

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Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790): "Lighthouses are more helpful than churches." . . . "Revelation, indeed, as such had no influence on my mind." . . . "The way to see by faith is to shut the eye to reason." . . . "The Convention (the United States Constitutional Convention) except for three or four persons, thought prayers unnecessary." . . . "When a religion is good, I conceive it will support itself, and when it does not support itself, and God does not take care to support it, so that its professors are obliged to call for help of the civil power, 'tis a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one." . . . "He (the Rev. Whitefield) us'd, indeed, sometimes to pray for my conversion, but never had the satisfaction of believing that his prayers were heard."

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William Herndon, Abraham Lincoln's law partner, (1818-1891): "Mr. Lincoln was an infidel in the very best sense of that abused

word." . . . "Let me say that Mr. Lincoln was an infidel. He did write a little work on infidelity in 1835-36, and never recanted. He was an out-and-out infidel, and about that there is no mistake." . . . "He (Lincoln) demanded facts, well-authenticated facts, as foundations of his belief; he had no faith in 'say soes,' no respect for that kind of authority in the religious world."

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Opie Read, during his interview with President Lincoln, said: "What is your conception of God?" Lincoln: "The same as my conception of nature." Read: "And what is that?" Lincoln: "That it is impossible for either to be personal."

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Abraham Lincoln: "It will not do to investigate the subject of religion too closely, as it is apt to lead to Infidelity." (From Manford's Magazine.) . . . "I never tire of reading Paine." (To James Tuttle.) . . . "My earlier views of the unsoundness of the Christian scheme of salvation and the human origin of the Scriptures have become clearer and stronger with advancing years and I see no reason for thinking I shall ever change them." (From a letter, written in 1862, to Judge J. A. Wakefield, an old and intimate friend.) . . . I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice, and by religious men who are certain they represent the Divine Will. . . . I hope it will not

be irreverent in me to say, that if it be probable that God would reveal his will to others, on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed he would reveal it directly to me." . . . "There was the strangest combination of church influence against me. It was concluded that no Christian ought to vote for me, because I belonged to no church." . . . "Friends, I agree with you in Providence; but I believe in the Providence of the most men, the largest purse, and the longest cannon." . . . "The churches, as such, must take care of themselves." . . . "The dogmas of the past are inadequate to the stormy present."

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Recently the *Saturday Evening Post* ran a long article about Mr. Hugh Baillie, head of the huge United Press, second in size only to the Associated Press. I'm quoting just two sentences from this piece, which will show what I mean when I attack the standard press for its superficiality. Here they are:

> "His attitude toward events is that of an old-fashioned fire-engine-and-police-raid reporter. He is an incurable seeker of the spectacular and of the human-interest angle, and he cares little for the profounder implications of world news."

So what's the good of Baillie's work as president of a great news-gathering organ-

ization? My idea of editing material for my numerous books and two periodicals is to try to seek out "the profounder implications of world news." Mr. Baillie frankly dopes his millions of readers. I try to enlighten them. Mr. Baillie never seeks to tell the truth about such controversial subjects as Russia, the Vatican policies in the direction of reaction, the conspiracies of the American hierarchy to control our reading, our radio, and our movies through pessure-groups that threaten disaster on those who fail to heed the warnings of the cardinals, the bishops and the other obscurantists who seek to keep the masses in intellectual slavery. The Haldeman-Julius publications specialize in such controversies and never rest until they get the whole story.

* * *

Buxom blonde, obviously worried: "I keep gettin' bigger all the time. I'm afraid I'll just have to grin and bear it."

* * *

Two Lesbians, while fixing up their new apartment, fell off a ladder and became tangled in a great heap of drapes. For quite a while they struggled to get out of the jumble of fabrics. At last, one stuck her head into the open and said: "Doesn't this remind you of the night we made the two nuns in a London blackout?"

* * *

Groucho Marx, in a radio broadcast:

"Some of my friends were puzzled when I took rubbers with me to bed. I had to explain that during the previous night I'd dreamt that Lana Turner was undressing in a room across the court and I could see everything because the light was on and the shades up. When she saw me, she beckoned invitingly and cried: 'Come right over, Groucho, but don't forget your rubbers.' I didn't have any rubbers, so I missed out, but tonight I'm not taking any chances."

* * *

W. C. Fields: "The cost of living has gone up $4.18 a quart."

* * *

Mr. Newlyrich was inordinately proud of his success and of all his fine possessions, but he retained a taste for carousing around in low saloons. One night on one of these junkets he took up with a fellow he had met and the two of them made a tour of the spots, getting gloriously drunk. As the taxi brought them to the rich man's house he insisted that his companion come in with him. "Just look at that house," he gloated. "The finest house in this part of town." In response to the ring, a butler opened the door. "This is Jeeves," announced Newlyrich. "Best and most expensive butler in the country. Look at that livery—best money can buy." Staggering across the spacious foyer, the rich drunk continued to point out one impressive pos-

session after the other: "Look at that statue—best there is. See those tapestries—best there is. And those paintings—can't find better." The wonders of the first floor pretty well exhausted, the proud owner declared: "If you think this floor is anything, you just ought to see the second floor. Look at that marble staircase — Italian Renaissance. Those chandeliers, all cut crystal." And thus the guest was subjected to a minute display of the second floor. Finally, the man approached a closed door and said: "Now I'll show you the best of all—my bedroom. But, shhh! my wife might be asleep." Entering, the host continued his extolling: "Look at that thick rug. Look at that hand-carved furniture. And that big canopied bed —that used to belong to Napoleon. Ah, and see that beautiful, shapely woman sleeping in the bed? Ever see a finer beauty? That's my wife. And see that strong, handsome, curly-haired fellow sleeping beside her? Perfect figure of a man, eh? Well, that's me."

✣ ✣ ✣

Montaigne: "The only art of effective writing lies in making the reader think you are in the same room with him, talking across the dinner table." (Dr. Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest authority on the art of writing, points out that the writer is talking across the reader's dinner table, which calls for a good dinner, with plenty of H-J highballs.)

"TRILATERAL NEUROSIS"

Dr. Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest neurologist, recently flew to Berlin, where he instructed Army psychiatrists in the finer points of the new illness, "trilateral neurosis." It has been found that American wives, who suddenly appear in Germany and ask for their husbands, are told to go back home by the next boat because the husband has grown to love some fraulein. The suddenness of it sends wifey into hysterics (says Dr. O'Bang), with ultimate hospitalization for trilateral neurosis. The best cure is a quick divorce and some other man.

* * *

Margaret Bourke-White: "Gandhi is anti-machine—a philosophy which isn't going to get India anywhere. Gandhi lectures on the devilishness of the machine and, when he is finished, departs via the motor power of a well-tooled limousine."

* * *

Used car salesman: "Not only do we stand behind every car we sell, but we push, too."

* * *

Benny Goodman, band leader: "From what my poor eyes have seen, wild dancing to hot music is ruining the shapes of our girls. I've noticed a great increase in piano legs, beefy thighs, wide bottoms, thick waists, and hefty bosoms. Does the future promise even worse sights?"

The 1828 Little Blue Books contain 270 miles of words, 110 miles more than in the latest edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. That's a lot of words to be edited by one man. But the job took 28 years, which figures at the rate of almost 10 miles of words per year. That wouldn't be so remarkable if they were just ordinary, mine-run words, but these happen to be good, meaningful, debunking, enlightening, liberating words. And that wasn't all the editor did. In addition, he edited 400 larger books (5½x8½ inches in size) which are attracting almost as much praise and attention as the Little Blue Books. And even that isn't all. During those 28 years he also turned out almost 400 issues of The American Freeman, most of which he wrote himself. Truly a man of many words.

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Customer: "Enclosed please find check for 20 Little Blue Books which kindly select for me. They are to be a gift to a man between 35 and 40 years of age."

✣ ✣ ✣

Reader: "I enjoy the way you start insurrections in the realm of your readers' most pious convictions."

✣ ✣ ✣

Pat and Mike were walking and came to the church. "Excuse me, Moike," Pat said, "I've got to go to confession, but I'll be right back." Pat went to the confessional

booth and began to make a clean breast of his sins. "Father, I've been drunk, I've sworn, I've sinned with a married woman—" "A married woman?" the Father interrupted. "Yes, Father," Pat confessed. "Who was it?" the Father asked. "Oh, I can't tell you that, Father," Pat said. "Was it Mrs. Kelly?" the Father asked. Pat was adamant. "Was it Mrs. O'Reilly?" the Father asked. Pat was silent. "Was it Mrs. O'Rourke?" Pat didn't answer. Later when he walked outside, Mike asked him how he made out. "Well, Moike," Pat said, "he gave me some trouble on one sin, but I kept my mouth shut and got three new leads."

* * *

The Rev. Alfred Henry Tyrer, who has written some liberal books on sex, love and marriage, sends me, from Toronto, Canada, a copy of his latest volume with this inscription: "To Mr. E. Haldeman-Julius—in appreciation of his life-work opening the eyes of the ignorant to facts that have largely been kept from them by those who should have known better." That's pretty good, comng as it does from a clergyman who has, for almost a half century, occupied pulpits of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

* * *

Dr. Oliver L. Reiser, professor of philosophy, University of Pittsburgh, and author of two of my new booklets (1. "Scientific

Humanism—Its Origins, Teachings, and Social Program." 2. "A Philosophy for World Unification, or Scientific Humanism as an Ideology for Cultural Integration"), writes that he has heard that Julian Huxley argued at Paris that UNESCO (of which he is director) ought to have a philosophy, and this should be "scientific humanism."

✣ ✣ ✣

A customer, who's an admirer of the works of the distinguished old English novelist, Anthony Trollope, sent in a list of books wanted, and closed with this request: "If possible get me some attractive Trollopes, in good condition. I don't care what they cost, so long as I get what I want." Some of the girls in the office were a little puzzled, and suspicious.

✣ ✣ ✣

In a criminal trial the defense lawyer pleaded extenuating circumstances. "The defendant," he said,' 'has plenty of criminal tendencies. If he had not exerted admirable self-restraint, he would not have been satisfied with a few burglaries, but would long since have become a murderer. The court should take this self-control into account as being strongly in his favor."

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How quickly people get on in the world in this country! The father came from Poland as a cobbler. His daughter already has such a complicated innerlife that he has to

be treated by two of the most expensive psychoanalysts.

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Oscar Levant: "I know I'm becoming a high-brow fast because I just looked at a sausage and thought of Picasso."

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Nudist: "We go coatless and vestless, and wear trousers to match."

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Husband: "My wife is just as beautiful today as she was 20 years ago when I married her. It only takes her longer."

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Lana Turner: "Antiquated social systems prevent the earth's 2,000,000,000 population from enjoying the benefits of science."

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Dancing School ad: "We guarantee not only not to make you a wallflower, but we remove the pot."

✣ ✣ ✣

How the Kansas City *Star* got it into print: "Greater love than this no man hath that he should lay down his wife for his friend."

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W. C. Fields: "My wife ran off with the butler, but I'm satisfied. My house burned down and I haven't any insurance, but I'm satisfied. And to cap everything off, my finances are in such a mess that I'm going bankrupt, but I'm satisfied. You see, I smoke Chesterfields."

THE BLIGHT OF PROSPERITY

Mr. Liam O'Flaherty, with the usual intuition of an artist, says:

> "As intellects most Americans are 12 years old. It's all the fault of Hollywood and New York. Both cities should be instantly destroyed."

Make an allowance for "Irish wit," which is a peculiar variety, as Shaw mordantly describes it in *John Bull's Other Island,* but you still have here a mischievous social misconception. Such observers are not reflecting on the intellect but on the exercise of it; or, to look at the matter from the angle of modern psychology, not at the capacity of "most Americans" for sensible thinking but the fact that they don't think. That dour (and anti-scientific) Scottish artist Thomas Carlyle said that the population of the British Isles was "30 millions, mostly fools." At that time the government hadn't given even an elementary education to 70 percent of them, as Carlyle knew. Two decades later they all had this elementary education and they read, in proportion to population, more serious books than they do today. If, both in Britain and America, the mass of the people—we don't confine it to the workers—believe as if they have low grades of intelligence the fundamental reason is that by the time the present generation arrived the world was greatly im-

proved and more prosperous, and it seemed to most people that the benevolent spirits which had done the work would continue to look after it while they amused themselves. Hollywood and its products were merely one of the toys that this new prosperity provided. People clamored for fun at any price—hence Hollywood's recent retrogression—and so much of it that serious thinking became a bore. It will one day be different, but as yet the best educator or stimulus to think is adversity, not prosperity.

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From an editorial in the London *Times*: "Being a member of beautiful Princess Elizabeth's night clubbing parties is not a bed of roses for the gay young Londoners who dance with the future queen. The main difficulty is that it is considered in bad taste for a member of royalty to visit a public toilet, or, as modern verbiage has it, a public powder room. Until now, the custom has been to take the entire party back to Buckingham Palace, and, after the charming Princess has done her necessary business, return to the night club for further dancing. Then, if there is another call, back to Buckingham Palace the whole party goes, and so on through the night. The young Britons have given considerable thought to this problem, without constructive results. One suggested that the old-

fashioned thunder-mug be put back into use, one to be kept in a properly secluded corner of the huge limousine, but this suggested reform struck some as more difficult than the problem itself."

* * *

Verdict of Macon, Ga., coroner's jury: "This person was so ill, that if he had not been murdered, he would have died a half hour before."

* * *

W. C. Fields: "Money isn't everything, but it lets you pick your own misery."

* * *

Walter Winchell: "I was educated by a private tooter."

* * *

Thomas Paine: "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must undergo the fatigue of supporting it."

* * *

Charles Lamb: "New Year's Day is Every Man's Birthday."

* * *

A big-hearted lover of animals bought some bagpipes to cheer up a despondent, melancholy octupus. He was beside himself with joy and thanked her profusely for the gift. "I refuse to play it," announced the octupus, in ecstatic tones. "I perefer to make love to it."

One of the purposes of the higher education is to teach a person how to live in leisure without hard work.

WHICH ARE THE HAPPY YEARS?

A fairly extensive quiz was recently conducted on the question "Which were the happiest years of your life?" So large a proportion of the interrogated said "at the age of 25 to 45," that we may take it that this is a general opinion. It contradicts a lot of the nonsense that's written about "the happy days of childhood," but we should have liked to see the answers if a second question had been put: "What do you mean by happiness?" Cynics, or mystics, who deplore the growth of skepticism, often ask, with an air of triumph, "whether with all our progress, people are really happier today than they used to be." Often they stoutly maintain that people aren't. They make the blunder of counting an occasional outburst, a few hours, of hilarity instead of the whole experience of life. They see or read of the peasants of backward countries like Poland or Bulgaria enjoying themselves boisterously on a holiday and ask us if these folk are likely to be happier now that a new type of state promises to educate them all and raise their wages. These sophists overlook the fact that these boisterous outbursts once in a month or a few months were mainly a reaction to a normal drab disease-ridden life. They'll probably laugh just as loudly, and much more frequently, in good cinemas and theaters and find new types of satisfaction for the eve-

ning's longer leisure. In the case of men and women finding 25 to 45 the happiest stretch of life sex-enjoyment is obviously the chief criterion. For people who live sensibly the stretch from 45 to 65 (or 75) will, when the world settles down, be just as happy, in any real meaning of the word, and, while all the anxiety and strain of rearing a family are gone, the new health will sustain sex-vitality and bring new pleasures.

* * *

Adolphe Menjou, Hollywood's fashionable stuffed shirt: "I didn't like what I saw when I attended a newsreel showing the President at an important ceremony. Since he once ran a men's clothing store, one had a right to expect something better. Instead, he wore a striped shirt with a striped suit, and a belt instead of suspenders. Truman's jacket sleeves were not narrow enough, and his shirt cuffs did not show. The knot of his tie was too tight. The trousers did not break just over the instep. How could an ex-haberdashery enterpreneur do so many wrong things? Such examples are bound to influence the younger generation to ways that are offensive to people of good taste. All this comes from the New Deal curse of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the first President who dared show himself to the citizenry in a shirt with soft-collar attached. It was nauseating, and the effects of that vulgar display are still being felt. Harry

Truman hasn't followed F.D.R.'s unconventional ideas in politics and economics, but he certainly has been loyal in matters of clothes. . . . Another word of advice before I close: stay away from jewelry."

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Dear Fanny: We done went down to Monkey Ward's and got one of them newfangled bathrooms, like the rich folks up North have.. This is how it goes: Over on one side of the room is a low white thing like the hogs drink outen of, only you kin git in and take a bath all over. Over on the other side is a little white gadget called a sink, which is for light washing—hands and face. They also sent us a roll of writing paper. But over in the corner, wow! They got a thing there you put one foot in, scrub it till it gets clean and then you pull a chain hard and you get fresh water for the other foot. Two lids came on the dern thing and we didn't have no use for 'em in the bathroom, so Ma's using one fer a bread board and we framed Grandpa's pitcher in the other. Very truly yours,

AUNT EMMY.

✣ ✣ ✣

W. C. Fields, just before he died: "If 1947 is any worse than 1946 it'll be an improvement." . . . "When Bob Hope is on the air I find it hard to breathe."

✣ ✣ ✣

Ancient, deathless joke: "Spent two weeks in Philadelphia last Sunday."

MORE ABOUT EARLY MAN

South African scientists have taken a keen interest in the evolution of man since they began to find prehistoric ape and human remains which, they claim, point to Africa as the cradle of the race. They had a conference on the subject at Nairobi in January, 1947. Professor Le Gros Clark created a bit of a sensation, the reports say, by claiming that the remains of an ape found at Sterkfontein in 1938 belonged to a creature that had had the brain and the general features of an ape but teeth those of man and the erect posture. He was the real "missing link." At once the mystics and the papers that cater to them, gushed about the body-blow (the 5347th) to the theory of the evolution of man from the ape. It's doubtful if it will bring much joy to the Baptists and Catholics to hear that more than 20 million years ago there were erect animals in Africa with the bodies and brains of apes, and with teeth "indistinguishable from those of men." We await responsible scientific discussion but in the meantime the man who imagines the Materialist losing sleep or leaning to the rewards of conversion is either a fool or totally ignorant of the subjct. Such a creature as Professor Clark described—an imaginative picture, clothing a few bones with flesh—would, if it were alive today, unquestionably be classed among the apes.

Mrs. Rabbit: "You'd be surprised if you knew the awful things that husband of mine does—and often, too!"

✤ ✤ ✤

An accessories firm is in Federal Court in Kansas City, Mo., charged with failing to restore Julian E. Tierney, former master sergeant, to his pre-war job. The ex-GI alleges that he's a "master craftsman" at making loaded dice. His petition says it took long training to learn the precision work necessary to adulterate dice.

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J. K. Folsom: "Queer dress, queer household furnishing, queer recreations may brand a person as a non-conformist or an eccentric, but certainly they do not make him a non-cooperator or a social parasite. Yet, society seems to hate and fear eccentricity more than it does parasitism. We judge the 'Americanism' of our immigrant peoples by their conformity rather than by their cooperation. Humanity might be better off if it cultivated more eccentricity."

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William Hazlitt: "Beware of prejudices. They are like rats, and men's minds are like traps; prejudices get in easily, but it is doubtful if they ever get out."

✤ ✤ ✤

H. G. Wells: "There is no more evil thing than race prejudice. It holds more baseness and cruelty than any other error in the world."

Emile Zola, in "J'Accuse": "I have only one passion, the desire for light in the name of humanity, which has suffered so much and has a right to happiness. My burning protest is only a shriek from the heart. Let them dare to hail me before the courts and let the investigation take place in the light of day. I await it."

* * *

A California fruit grower was showing some friends his ranch. Noticing a hungry-looking, dirty, ragged man in the field, they asked: "Who's that tramp?" The landowner grew indignant and replied, "He's no tramp. He's a fruit picker." Later in the season the same group saw the same man. "Who is that fruit picker?" they asked. "He's not a fruit picker," the ranch owner replied, angrily. ."That's a tramp." The fruit had already been picked.

* * *

Lord Acton: "The provision made in any state for minorities is the best test of the standard of civilization in that state."

* * *

John Morley: "The world only grows better, even in a moderate degree in which it does grow better, because people wish that it should, and take the right steps to make it better."

* * *

From a Negro: "If you discriminate against me because I am dirty, I can make myself clean. If you discriminate against

me because I am bad, I can reform and be good. If you discriminate against me because I am ignorant, I can learn. If you discriminate against me because I am ill-mannered, I can improve my manners. *But* if you discriminate against me because of my color, you discriminate against me because of something Nature gave me and over which I have no control."

❖ ❖ ❖

A little boy came running home from school crying: "Mother, what are the names of those children I'm supposed to hate?"

❖ ❖ ❖

Prof. William James, psychologist: "A kindly lady wept copiously as she watched a play in which one of the homeless characters shivered in the cold and in the snow. Outside, without protection, in a real snow, was her wet, shivering coachman, waiting to drive her home."

❖ ❖ ❖

Vincent Sheehan, in "This House Against This House": "We contrasted the oppressive atmosphere of India with the gaiety and charm of China. Those who got into the plane at Bengal and got out at Schechuan would exclaim, 'God, what a relief!' The explanation is that China has been consistently rational and ethical, whereas India has been mystic and metaphysical."

❖ ❖ ❖

Overheard: "It was just a platonic friendship—play for me, tonic for her!"

BING LI DISCOVERS THAT MAN CANNOT AVOID THE INEVITABLE

By Paul Eldridge

Seeing that the end of each path
Had an open grave,
Bing Li, Doctor of all Philosophies,
Seated himself at a cross-road,
Thinking:
"If I do not budge, I shall live forever."
But slowly, the dust underneath him
Gave way,
Forming a large open grave.

* * *

Here's how a Chinese lecturer (Dr. Wang Hung-Lo) disposed of the race problem in two sentences: "There are five great races. There are the black colored race, and the white colored race, and the brown colored race, and the red colored race, and lastly there are we Chinese, the skin colored race."

* * *

Old-timer: "The reason I don't talk to myself no more is because I've been with myself so long that I done talked myself out so I ain't got any more to say."

* * *

Thomas Carlyle: "The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none."

* * *

W. C. Fields: "Mortimer Snerd is a high-brow Phil Harris."

* * *

Student of the new physics: "I'd rather

have nothing at all than something that doesn't exist."

✣ ✣ ✣

A liberal Catholic doctor, after giving birth control data to a woman patient: "I believe my church should keep out of the bedroom."

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Note left behind by escaped prisoner: "I hope you will pardon me for the liberty I am taking."

✣ ✣ ✣

Mrs. Margaret Sanger, birth control exponent and author of Little Blue Books (No. 14, "What Every Girl Should Know," No. 208, "Debate on Birth Control," and No. 1600, "Questions and Answers About Birth Control"): "Recently I attended a conference in Sweden sponsored by the Sex Education Alliances. The Swedes, I found, have an open, realistic attitude toward sex. Many of them believe in living together before marriage in order to establish a good adjustment. It is an open and pretty generally accepted thing. At their birth control clinic, which I visited, three out of five women who applied had been living with a man before marriage. It's a rare thing for a man to deny paternity of a child. The Swedes, by the way, are strong on family life."

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The Rev. Dr. Preston Bradley, pastor of the Liberal People's Church of Chicago, and

chairman of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination, was asked recently by a woman for information in regard to becoming a member of his church. His reply: "Any person, 16 years of age or older, *of the white race* may join the church."

✣ ✣ ✣

M.C.. referring to a "strip-tease" who exits to big applause: "That's what the public wants—talent!"

✣ ✣ ✣

Patsy O'Bang on Mae West: "She has all the sex appeal of a handful of wet sawdust." . . . "A bachelor is a fellow who won't take 'yes' for an answer." . . . "Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some just grate on you." . . . "The fellow who invented the davenport should be proud because millions have been made on his invention." . . . "After a fine, sumptuous repast, there's nohting like a good cigar, excellent wine, quiet music, lively conversation, and a bad girl." . . . "Errol Flynn received the following from the Boston book censors: 'You personally may enter our city, but we have banned your address book.'" . . . "Los Angeles (where anything can happen) is experimenting with a cemetery that will feature tombstones with jokes on them."

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Mark Twain: "I have never let my schooling interfere with my education."

GRAND CRUSADE FOR PIETY

Now *Reader's Digest* joins (with the film companies, razor-blade manufacturers, ward-politicians, etc.) the grand crusade. It is using its enormous circulation to promote debate and discussion circles all over America. This would be admirable if the discussion were perfectly free and the material supplied for it honestly taken from representatives of all opinions. To judge by the specimen sent us, the aim is exactly the opposite. We get a booklet neatly printed and bound in gold paper, entitled "Science Joins the Church." Science is represented by A. Cressy Morrison, of whom you may have heard. After profound thinking he formulates "Seven Invincible Proofs of the Existence of God." Many an Atheist working man could tell this "learned and original scientist" that his first proof—that the world could not have arisen by chance—was, as Cicero tells us, discussed by the ancient Greeks and Romans, and that 2,300 years ago the Atheist Democritus smothered it by pointing out that no Atheist pretends that things developed by chance. The other proofs are succinctly stated: The Power of Life to Achieve Its Will (illustrated by "The Mystery of Eels") Man's Power to Reason, The Phenomenon of Genes, the Husbandry of Nature, and Man's Power of Imagination. Atheists must be blind to have overlooked these things. The Golden Guide goes on to say, in large type:

The Great Men of Science Agree. This statement is justified by short quotations from five men—Einstein, Compton, Jeans, Eddington and Steinmetz. We can think of a few hundred others who *don't* agree. And we wonder if there is even one who agrees with Steinmetz that "some day people will learn that material things do not bring happiness . . . then the scientists of the world will turn their laboratories over to the study of God and prayer and the spiritual forces which as yet have hardly been guessed at." We can fairly understand why there is so much inspired stuff written in connection with religion, but we suggest this thesis for one of these discussion circles: Why is there more lying in defense of religion even than in defense of a political creed or the price of pants?

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Aggravated woman, unjustly in jail: "I never had anything jerk the fat offen me like this has."

✣ ✣ ✣

Golfer, in the clink for beating his wife to death with a golf club: "And it took only three strokes!"

✣ ✣ ✣

Class-conscious sassiety dame, who lives in a big house, to woman in a little house: "We are troubled with rats in our home. I suppose you are similarly bothered with mice."

HOW BLIND THESE ATHEISTS ARE

The American Weekly continues to pour out evidence of the ignorance and folly of Atheists who say that a knowledge of science "induces Atheism"—it no longer adds "a lack of ideals"—by letting "great American scientists" profess their faith. The latest we have is by Dr. Roger J. Williams, a biochemist, and therefore a man from whom we should expect a better show than from mathematicians and physicists. Unfortunately, the only approach to a reason for his belief in God that he gives us is the wearisome old twaddle about the unique teaching of Jesus. It "arose by intuition"—a fiction that disappeared from manuals of psychology 20 years ago—and "his selection and enunciation of the fundamental laws of life indicates (!) an ability to draw upon a Universal Mind." How is it that scientists tread as lightly as mice when they enter a field of science that is not their own, but when it is a question of religion they burst into history, philosophy, ethics, psychology, comparative religion, etc., as heavily as a bull invading the rose garden? It is time the proper experts told them that they do not know what they are talking about.

* * *

Comment of Britain's Field Marshal Lord Wilson on appointment of Marshall to office of Secretary of State: "Damned nice fellow. Rather odd, though. Reads books.

Damned eccentric, if you ask me. My word."

* * *

A sassiety dame insured her expensive wardrobe while traveling in Europe. On reaching London, she found an article missing and immediately cabled her broker in New York: "Gown lifted in London." Her broker replied: "What do you think our policy covers?"

* * *

Prof. William James, in a lecture at Harvard: "Gentlemen, you may talk about the pleasures of sexual intercourse, but as for me, give me a good, healthy movement of the bowels."

* * *

Husband: "I have everything shut up for the night except you, dear."

* * *

Girl, to boy friend who's working hard trying to make her: "There's just one thing I want to say before you go any further, and that's not to go any further."

* * *

Henry David Thoreau: "Books are the treasured wealth of the world, the fit inheritance of generations and nations."

* * *

He: "I'll bet you won't marry me." So she called his bet and raised him six.

* * *

Fig vendor, in Arabia: "My figs are the biggest of all figs; my figs are 10 times as big as they are!"

Now that office girls have established themselves as "Receptionists," office boys are insisting on being classified as "Distribution Specialists."

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Patsy O'Bang: "Fulton J. Sheen is a thinker for the ages . . . the ages from 5 to 12."

✣ ✣ ✣

The Italian composer, Rossini, while visiting France, learned that a group of wealthy admirers planned to have a statue erected in his honor. "How much will it cost?" asked the composer. When told it would cost 10,000,000 francs, Rossini, who was poverty-stricken at the time, exclaimed: "How extravagant! For 5,000,000, I'll stand on the pedestal myself."

✣ ✣ ✣

Mark Twain's book, "The Jumping Frog," contains this dedication: "TO JOHN SMITH. It is said that a man to whom a book is dedicated always buys a copy. If this is true in this instance, a princely affluence is about to burst upon the author."

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Mae West: "Knowledge is power—if you know it about the right person."

✣ ✣ ✣

Bernard Shaw: "The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

Charles Reade: "Recipe for a successful novel: Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry, make 'em wait."

✣ ✣ ✣

Writer, to editor: "Please read this story immediately as I have other irons in the fire." Editor, to writer: "I have read your story and advise you to put it with the other irons."

✣ ✣ ✣

Groucho Marx: "If you've heard this story before, don't stop me, because I'd like to hear it again."

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Double billing, seen on movie theater marque: "One Way to Love. . . . Hit the Hay."

✣ ✣ ✣

Dime slot machines, after going through tests under the direction of Philip G. Fox, professor of business administration, University of Wisconsin, were found to be hard on the players. The jackpot, on the average, contains 65 dimes. On the average, it takes 2,667 plays, or $266.70 to win this $6.50 jackpot.

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It appears that the British Treasury has lost about $300,000,000 since the end of the war by black-market work in Germany. This was chiefly because the Germans were so famished for cigarettes that they offered the troops anything they could spare—watches, jewelry, good cameras, field-

glasses etc.—for a few. One could buy something worth $5 for 20c worth of cigarettes. The cigarettes were supplied to the troops in their canteens or through relatives in Britain without paying duty, which is 400 or 500 percent, and the goods smuggled into Britain without paying duty. Hundreds of thousands of folk made good bargains and little syndicates made fortunes. Another result, besides the fraud on the lean treasury, is that there are periodical famines in cigarettes in Britain. This is one of 100 little freaks of the let-alone policy.

* * *

The barrage against Attlee and his Labor government in Britain is rising to a blitz. One letter that appeared in the most "intellectual" of London evening papers drew attention to the fact that Attlee, unlike Churchill, never mentions God in his big speeches, and the editor gave it the title "The Inspiration We Miss." Give Attlee credit for not stooping to that trickery, but in point of fact he is a practicing member of the Church of England.

* * *

O. Henry, when asked, "What do you think of the hereafter?" replied: "I had a little dog and his name was Rover, and when he died, he died all over."

* * *

Mae West: "After a divorce I feel like a new man."

John Barrymore: "Make love to every woman you meet. If you get 5 percent on your outlay, it's a good investment."

* * *

Groucho Marx: "My advice to the younger generation is to reach the age of discretion as soon as possible. You've reached it when you've learned to be indiscreet discreetly."

* * *

W. C. Field: "Just because you've fallen in love with the dimple is no reason for marrying the whole girl."

* * *

Errol Flynn: "A girl in my yacht is worth five in the phone book."

* * *

Lana Turner: "Don't question your wife's judgment—look whom she married."

* * *

Groucho Marx: "I saw the show under bad conditions—the curtain was up."

* * *

Robert Benchley, on a bad show: "For the first time in my life I envied my feet. They were asleep."

* * *

Patsy O'Bang: "Westbrook Pegler's propaganda is still the cream of the crap."

* * *

Overheard: "The sooner I never see his face again, the better it'll be for both of us when we meet."

Groucho Marx: "I never forget a face, but in your case I'll make an exception."

✣ ✣ ✣

Lana Turner: "Why struggle to be difficult, when with a little more effort one may be impossible?"

✣ ✣ ✣

Henry B. Fuller (1857-1929): "Chicago is the only great city in the world to which all its citizens have come for the avowed object of making money."

✣ ✣ ✣

Doctor: "You're run down. Go and cheer yourself up at one of those snappy revues. It'll take your mind off your business to see dozens of neat, shapely, dancing legs." Patient: "That's just what it won't do. I'm an artificial leg manufacturer."

✣ ✣ ✣

Groucho Marx: "When two drips go steady it's a drizzle."

✣ ✣ ✣

Testimonial: "Your nerve remedy is wonderful. When I married my husband he found me so nervous he couldn't sleep with me, but now, after only two bottles of your Drowsy-Drops, anyone can."

✣ ✣ ✣

Hundred-year-old duffer, telling reporters how he did it: "I'm old but I'm still in perfect physical condition—strong, healthy, potent, with glands that are vibrant and energetic. And here's how I did it. When

my wife and I got married we made an agreement not to argue. If she ever got mad around the house, she promised she would not say anything but just go back to the kitchen until she calmed down. And if ever I got mad I wasn't to say anything but just walk right out the back door and into the backyard. As a result of that agreement, I've led what you might call an outdoor life."

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Thomas A. Kempis: "Everywhere I have sought rest and found it nowhere, save in little nooks wtih little books."

✣ ✣ ✣

Overheard: "Anyway, that's my personal consensus of opinion."

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Interior decorator: "For her valances I wanted a delicate pastel, so I decided on a lovely shade of snot-green."

✣ ✣ ✣

AP dispatch from Berlin: "Medical officers with the occupation forces in Germany are insisting that since the V.D. rate is going up that short-arms be made longer."

✣ ✣ ✣

W. C. Fields: "My favorite exercise is a nice brisk lay in an overstuffed couch."

✣ ✣ ✣

Copywriter, employed by a N. Y. agency: "I try to put feeling into my copy. For in-

stance, if I have to do an ad about somebody's chewing gum, I shut my eyes and think of the wonderful things I could say about Abraham Lincoln. When I feel full of the proper adjectives I dash off the copy, inserting the name of the gum in the proper places."

✣ ✣ ✣

Santayana: "There is no cure for birth or death except to enjoy the interval."

✣ ✣ ✣

Groucho Marx: "That guy's all right because he's willing to admit he's all wrong when he is."

✣ ✣ ✣

Gypsy Rose Lee: "The finest art can't make a platitude purr like an epigram."

✣ ✣ ✣

Maid: "You know, Mrs. Wampus, how hard you've tried to match that porcelain horse's head in the rumpus room? Well, you needn't try any more. I just broke it."

✣ ✣ ✣

Tall, gorgeous blonde, at perfume counter: "Fifty dollars for an ounce of 'Perhaps!' For 50 bucks I insist on something more definite than 'Perhaps!' "

✣ ✣ ✣

Voltaire (1694-1778): "It is very sad for humanity that those who call themselves heralds of celestial commandments, interpreters of Divinity—in a word, the theologians—are sometimes the most dangerous

of all; that one finds among them some who are as pernicious in society as they are obscure in their thoughts; and that their beings are inflated with gall and pride in proportion as they are empty of truth. They would like to trouble the world for a sophistry, and to interest all kings in avenging by steel and fire an argument between tweedlededee and tweedlededum. Every thinking person who is not of their persuasion is an Atheist, and any king who favors them not is damned. You know, Your Royal Highness (Crown Prince of Prussia, later Frederick the Great), that the best one can do is to abandon to themselves these pretended teachers and real enemies of the human species. Their words, when ignored, lose themselves in the wind; but when the weight of authority falls on them, that wind asquires a force which sometimes overturns thrones."

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In the crises through which Britain has recently passed, it was decided, among a hundred ways of saving power, that weekly papers must be suspended. Many put up a squeal, but the worst of all were the religious weeklies, which almost without exception, said that the order was inspired by irreligion and aimed at them. The editors of many of the suppressed papers were invited to write as guests in the dailies. One paper went further and asked the Archbishop of Canterbury, the President of the

Free Churches, and the Catholic cardinal to write articles. These might have appeared in parish-magazines. The Protestant oracle said that "there is little or no religion among thousands of the people of this country," though "the heart of man is restless without God." Thousands! His own church has recently shown, after inquiry, that about 36 million out of 45 have no religion. The cardinal laid it down that "no high civilization can be developed without a living faith." Their propaganda seems to be bankrupt, so they lean more and more to power-politics.

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"Hope for the best but prepare for the burst" was the slogan put up in plumbers' shops in a recent blizzard-period.

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To read some of the comments in the press one would think that Britain has never had a crisis before. Listen to this: "Britain has seen dark days before. In the storm of battle and calamity she has a secret vigor and pulse like a cannon." Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that nearly a century ago.

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A sidelight on the British "crisis" was that a Woolworth store that still had painted over it the old slogan, "Nothing over Sixpence," (a dime) had in its windows smoked salmon marked $3 a pound.

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"My husband," said the lady in court

"told me that he once won a prize at a singing competition but I found out that it was hush-money."

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France has made a second cut in prices. They have been reduced by 10 percent since January, 1947.

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One political leader in France has challenged another to a duel, to be fought in the Congress building. Anywhere else in France it would be illegal, but the police have no power to enter the House of Representatives. An official charmingly commented: "But they must not use pistols there or they might break the windows, and windows are expensive nowadays."

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A quarrel in the higher ranks of the Federal Council of Churches in America has elicited some strange writing. The President, it seems, wants to get all the Protestant churches together in "unified political action." The leader of the opposition goes far. He says:

> "We do not want a man-made religion called social gospel to solve the social, economic, and political problems of today. St. Paul devoted himself not to making the Roman Empire behave but wholly to the task of converting them to Christ."

We always thought so and are glad to have assurance of an expert. But when he

goes on to say that converting the Romans to Christ "eventually resulted in a social revolution within the Empire" we submit that history has a little to say about that. The only result visible to historians was the collapse of civilization.

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A. C. asks us to comment on this: "For a long time I thought that matter was universal. Now I find it is not so. Energy is eternal." It is pointed out in a number of Joseph McCabe's books that this does not make the least difference to Materialism. Before the development of the study of radium, "energy" was always taken as an abstract word: the capacity of a body to do work. Now it is taken as a reality, but, whatever else is said about it, it is measurable and therefore material in the only sense in which any Materialist ever used the word. None of the new scientific ideas affect Materialism. Manuals of logic of various grades and prices are included in the Haldeman-Julius list.

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Professor Blackett, one of the guest workers on the atom bomb, has made a concise statement on what he believes to be the future of atomic energy. He thinks that within two years an experimental plant will be running on atomic energy in America and in about five years we should be able to design power units for large power stations. A 20-year program would then be possible,

and by 1970 "an important fraction of world power will be obtained from atomic energy." It would probably be available for large ships. He reminds us that the modern State differs so vastly from the ancient because it has about 20 times more power per head of population. The opening up of a new source of power promises another big advance. But a still greater advance may be made in the future. The prodigious energy of the sun is not analogous to a uranium pile but is engineered by the conversion of hydrogen into helium, not by splitting heavy atoms. When man can do this, "as he surely will some day," he will "have at his disposal such vast quantities of power that human life on earth may be completely transformed." It is the supreme irony of history that three-fourths of the race take no serious interest in this choice between annihilation and an era of unprecedented prosperity for all.

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It appears that the discoverer of Basic English was a Cambridge professor who has sold it to his government for $115,000. It contains 850 words, so he has a good bargain at $113 a word. Whether it will prove worth the sum is another matter. Many non-British governments hase refused to entertain the idea of taking it on as an auxiliary language. A universal language is a century overdue but it does not seem advisable to make its vocabulary out of one national language.

We do not often meet a new idea in religious literature, so we pass this on. To the objection that our modern age has no room for the asceticism which seems to be the real flower of Christian virtue, a bishop has replied that the Greek word *askesis* means atheistic training. Unfortunately the gentlemen in the early church who went in for it most zealously, like the malodorous hermit who lived on the top of a high column for years, never trained for anything. For the modern struggle to get out of the mess into which we have blundered and pass into real scientific age, we want something different from hair-shirts, a fish diet, and emasculation. There is a great fight before us—America's turn will come according to most of the prophets—and if anybody thinks that the best training for it is to retire into Christian or Buddhist monasteries, the classic homes of the ascetic, he had better keep his opinion to himself.

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People are slow to realize that America's preponderant position in the UN does not greatly edify the better part of the nations. Under its particular banner of Freedom and Democracy and in automatic opposition to Russian and its allies, it leads and relies upon the support of a scrubby bunch. Three of them—Salvador, Dominica, and Argentina—put their fingers to their noses at mother UN when it orders an ostracism of Franco, the worst Fascist bully left in Europe.

Portugal, Brazil, and other nations have no more idea of carrying out the UN agreement. South Africa is rude on other points. Greece, with as greasy a lot of political adventurers and sadists as can be imagined, hangs on transparently for what it can get. Persia, Egypt, and even Eire are not the purest-minded companions a great democratic republic might be expected to collect. As the supreme aim of the American representatives is to destroy Socialism, it is ironic to reflect that the only two friends of whose character they might boast, Britain and France, have Socialist majorities.

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Argentina has begun its beneficent work of receiving poor persecuted refugees from Europe. About 30 were brought over from Italy in an Argentinian steamer in March, 1947. They were Croat war-criminals with stinking records who were awaiting a just trial in Italy. But they are all good Catholics.

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The Classics Club announces a new book in these warming terms: "Here, in the clearest reasoning in all literature, is how to live an intelligently happy life, whether we possess worldly wealth or only the riches in our hearts and minds." The book is a new translation of Plato's Dialogues. As the sentiments are supposed to come from Socraties, we suggest for the dustcover that famous occasion in the happy home of the

philosopher when his wife Xantippe emptied a certain domestic vessel over him and he placidly says: "After thunder one expects a little rain."

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The Italian Foreign Office has reached agreements in virtue of which 600,000 Italians will permanently quit their country in 1947. Half of them will go to other European countries, half overseas (though only about 5,802 to the United States). So millions more Italian emigrants are to follow the millions who quit in the first quarter of this century. Yet the Vatican and the priests continue to denounce birth control in violent language. If the beautiful land with a fine industry and some notable industrial advantages like hydro-electricity cannot support anything like its population today what will the situation be in another half century if the poor women are hounded on to breed? Is it possible that the Vatican regards Italy as a stud-farm for supplying other countries with good Catholics—that is to say, ignorant and docile Catholics?

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One of the shrewdest European observers at the Moscow Conference, David Raymond, gives the Anglo-American game away. He says that "it is doubtful if Germany will ever again become a military power capable on her own of bringing Europe under her subjection." As a matter of fact no one

seriously thinks it possible in the next few decades and making plans for 40 or 50 years ahead is so new a phenomenon in statesmanship that their language is suspect. Why then do Marshall and the American military authorities talk of having to occupy the country for another 40 years? The bits of Nazi plotting they occasionally find, or pretend to find, are absurd. Raymond says that there is no mystery. It is, of course, the America-Russia clash of interests.

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Washington is delicately tactful in the choice of foreign envoys and ambassadors. To Catholic courts or capitals it always sends Catholics, and so on. Now, during the bitter struggle of the Socialist majority and the Churchillian minority of Britain, when the nation has elected by an enormous majority of deputies a government pledged to carry out the Socialist program, Washington sends a violent anti-Socialist to represent America.

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While the native religious weeklies of Britain were content to express their opinions in theological language of the decree suspending the publication of weeklies, two small papers defied it and appeared as usual. These are Polish Catholic papers weekly making the customary demand of war on Russia. The Labor government closed its eyes to them until it was angrily reminded.

Then it promised to investigate, which is civil-service and military language for procrastinate. Warsaw, naturally, continued to send the paper which it prints in English. The Polish soldiers found it on sale in the London Y.M.C.A. destroyed all copies, and threatened to burn down the building if any more were shown. Britain, at heavy cost, maintains tens of thousands of these ruffians in idleness. They refuse to go back to Poland. They like the conditions given them in Britain, they say. It is a scandalous instance of kowtowing.

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Further big constitutional changes are announced from the U.S.S.R. Each of the 16 republics that compose the Union is to have its own army and its own representatives abroad. Doubtless this is some new subtle development of the dictatorship of Moscow. We discern a certain amount of tyranny in the alteration of the clause of the 1936 Constitution which granted a seven-hour day, but with the job of reconstruction that the Nazis threw upon Russia, perhaps it is as well not to be too critical. Heavy industries will, however, have a six-hour day, and in a few which require special legislation the working week is reduced to four days. The British Labor government, which (generally) despises Russia, has tried to get its workers to have day and night shifts. Most of these workers refuse, but continue to turn up their noses at Russia.

Curious how soldiers get their eyes opened, or their tongues loosened, in a colonial atmosphere. General Sir Francis de Guingaud (good old English name), Montgomery's Chief of Staff during the war and one of his ablest men, said publicly in South Africa on March 4, 1947, that there was no need to be afraid of "the Russian bogey." Russia certainly does want war, he said, but vitally needs peace. Somehow we feel that this gentleman ought to know more about the matter than Hearst, McCormick, or even Cardinal Spellman. Of course, we would not for a moment suggest that he is more truthful than these models of piety.

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When the American troops were leaving France they turned over 40,000 jeeps, among other things, to the French Surplus Property Board. It has failed to account for 20,000 of them. Who were the lucky profiteers, the American officers or the French officials? As Pope Leo X's biographer, Bishop Giovio, said in another connection: "These are secrets of the bedchamber which no polite person seeks to penetrate."

* * *

The real nature of the great underground Nazi plot which the American occupying authorities announced that they have detected was given away by a British officer in Germany. He said contemptuously that it was "fourth-form stuff." A score or so of men were to be sent to England to

scatter plague and anthrax germs in railway depots, restaurants and the theaters. Planes are needed to do war-scale damage by such means, and in fact such bacteria as the anthrax-bacillus are harmless unless they find a cut in the skin. At the most, a plot to do a few murders like the Palestine Terrorists or the Irish Republican Army of 10 years ago was unearthed, but even of this much we have no definite evidence. It may not be invidious to remind ourselves that while military authorities in Germany boil over with indignation at these "discoveries," in America they cheerfully boast that they have in readiness or in preparation whole clouds of germ-dust and poisonous chemicals which make the common idea of germ-warfare look as innocent as snowballing. In any case the basic idea of these imaginary Nazi plots is ridiculous. After the last war (1919-24) there were two plots. The workers in one case, the police in the other, blew the rebels off the streets. Do they expect something worse while Germany is gaunt with hunger and the Allies keep heavy military forces with ample airfleets watching eagerly for an excuse to give another turn to the screw?

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Professor Gilbert Murray, vague Rationalist and self-styled Humanist, has several times pained his admirers by an apparent hatred of Russia that hardly suits his humanitarian creed. On January 20, 1947, he

had a letter in the London *Times* repeating the cry that Christian civilization is in danger and its constituent nations must get together. One of the dangers, he says, is "the rise of Nazi and Marxist ideologies in Europe." And he gives further point to his exclusion of Russia from the proposed United States of Europe—which generally points to war on Russia—by saying that by Christian nations he means "the nations that in the mass call themselves Christian." We might expect more precise language from a great scholar, but he clearly means that in France and England, for instance, the mass of the population call themselves Christian. Professor Murray here again illustrates the fallacy of the value of the opinion of a great scholar or great scientist outside his own province. Any expert article or book on the actual strength of religion will give him authoritative clerical admissions that one-fifth of the British and about the same proportion of the French are not, and do not call themselves, Christians while the Atheists admit that a third of the Russian people are Christians. Which, then, are the Christian nations?

* * *

Here is another and more amusing unwise-crack of a literary man. In *The New York Times*, J. Donald Adams was permitted to say, apropos of the discussion of the place of science in life:

"Fundamentally science is a tool. For

the use which man makes of it he must look elsewhere than to science itself. He must look beyond reason. . . . He must look to literature, where the aspirations of mankind have their life."

It is a fairly safe bet that this is the craziest stuff you will find in all the acres that have been written about science during the last 12 months. There is only one point in doubt, the use of the atom bomb. How many literary men have written plain, honest English about it? How many politicians, who have to decide, read literary men? And is it literary men, sacred or profane, or scientific men themselves who have done so much in the past year to save America from being dragged into savagery?

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In a small fishing village of a bleak region in the north of Scotland there died in February an old lady of 107 who had "never seen a tree, a street car, a train, or a movie" —to say nothing of hundreds of other things that are familiar even to our cats and dogs. We have made no inquiry about the attitude of this virginal mind toward religion, but we will bet 1,000 to 1 that she was a staunch supporter of the kirk and reader of the Bible.

* * *

"Say, Bill, I hear your girl's pop threw a party last night." "Sure he did—I was the party."

1843